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Congress of the United States

June 29, 2006

Committee on Education
and the Workforce

Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy

Co-Chair
Children's Environmental Health Caucus
Member
Congressional Arts Caucus
Internet Caucus
Law Enforcement Caucus
Historic Preservation Caucus

Administrator Hector Barreto
Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Barreto:

Heavy rains in New Jersey are causing very high river levels, and are resulting in flooding in a number of towns in the 12th Congressional District. This morning, I spent several hours surveying the initial damage first hand. Emergency management experts are predicting that the flooding will soon meet or exceed the flooding that ravaged our area in April of 2005, and may rival the worst flooding event in the last half century.

For these and other reasons, I ask you to expedite the Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) of the flooded areas in New Jersey. Further, I request that you provide all of the resources necessary to guarantee that the PDA is completed as soon as possible. As you know, the PDA team is a joint group of FEMA personnel, state emergency officials, county and local officials, and representatives of the U.S. Small Business Administration. This team will review the damage to homes and businesses, the emergency costs incurred by the local, county, and state government in responding to the flooding, and the storm's overall detrimental impact on the affected communities. This assessment will also review the impact of the disaster on homes and businesses as well as critical infrastructure including roads, bridges, and facilities such as public utilities, local schools, hospitals, emergency management agencies, and police and fire departments. I know that New Jersey's emergency management officials are eager to assist you in any capacity necessary.

In 2005, similar flooding affected many parts of my district. However, a presidential emergency declaration was not issued because the PDA did not find enough damage to public property. At that time, New Jersey officials raised questions about the accuracy of the financial assessment of public property. Specifically, concerns were expressed about how the amount of damage to interstate bridges was allocated to the respective assets of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. I ask that you ensure that the PDA fully and accurately takes into account the costs that will be incurred by New Jersey, its local governments, and its citizens to repair the damage to public and private property in the affected regions of New Jersey.

Additionally, I ask that you exercise your full authority to assist and accelerate FEMA's regional and national review of the PDA, as well as its determination of New Jersey Governor Corzine's request for a presidential declaration of emergency. As you know, the Governor has requested federal assistance because he has determined the extent of damage exceeds the recovery capabilities of the State and local governments. It is my hope that you and the President will review his request expeditiously and support New Jersey application for federal assistance. The citizens of New Jersey cannot afford to wait for a prolonged review, as the flood waters continue to rise and the damage to their homes and business grows with each passing day.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance to you or your staff in accelerating FEMA's review process. I look forward to continue to work with you as New Jersey recovers from this national disaster.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rush Holt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rush" and last name "Holt" clearly distinguishable.

RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress